Simply Plated!

More than 20 easy, innovative recipes with traditional Greek products



Kerasma
Greek Mediterranean
Gastronomy

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Gastronomy

Healthy, Regional, Delicious
Greek Cuisine

Greek cuisine springs from a wonderful, aromatic melting pot where history, geography, tradition and innovation all simmer together with delicious results. Greek food is by and large simple, an accessible cuisine that translates well in both home and restaurant kitchens. It is also a cuisine that travels well, mostly because of its innate healthfulness. It's simple: when you eat Greek, you feel good.

Greece is a small country, but the range of regional foods is impressive. The country's pristine but rough geography of mountains and islands helped preserve traditions in times gone by, when travel was more difficult. In the last decade, though, culinary traditions have been transformed. A whole range of regional products is now available widely, both within Greece and abroad. Many of the country's place-specific foods, from cheeses to olives, olive oils, honey, fruits, vegetables and more are now protected under the European Union's Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) Laws, thus assuring both their continuation as distinct regional and traditional foods and their quality.

Many of Greece's most unique regional specialties are still undiscovered outside the country's borders. Saffron, for example, a spice that was savored in Greece for thousands of years through the Byzantine era, fell out of use and then was rediscovered as modern chefs began to incorporate it in their creations. Now, it is among the best-loved local spices and used in breads and biscuits, sauces galore, even in the spirits industry. Chios mastic, an unusual, exotic crystal spice culled from the sap of a tree related to the pistachio, is another Greek flavor that has seen a recent Renaissance as chefs expand its uses, playfully incorporating it into sauces, sweets, and more. It is also one of the most therapeutic spices, as recent science has discovered.

Greek olives, of course, have long been the country's most prized culinary ambassador, appearing on tables far from Greece's borders. The Kalamata olive, for example, is arguably one of the world's most recognizable foods. But there are also other delicious regional olives, sparkling green olives, plain, cracked, stuffed with almonds, red peppers, garlic and more; plump, round fleshy olives from Central Greece and elsewhere that go by various names; shiny, wrinkled black olives cured in salt that are harvested mature. Even these ageless fruits have been inspiration for contemporary Greek food producers, both artisan and larger. Greek olives now come with an array of flavors, marinated with herbs, vinegar, wine, olive oil, garlic, citrus fruits, and more. Olive oil, of course, is arguably the absolute most basic food to the Greeks. Greece produces the highest percentage (more than 80%) of extra-virgin olive oil than any other olive-oil-producing country. Regional oils, such as those from Siteia in eastern Crete, Kolymbari in western Crete, Kalamata and Sparta in the Peloponnese, and elsewhere are constant prize-winners in taste competitions around the world.

Greek cheeses are among the most ardently savored foods on the Greek table. There is an enormous range of cheeses, mostly produced from sheep's and goat's milk, with some cow's milk cheeses. Many of these are PDO products. The most recent addition to the litany of protected regional cheeses is Feta, which won official PDO status just before the close of 2005.

Honey, like olives and olive oil and even certain simple island cheeses, has been part of the Greek larder from time immemorial, an elixir touted by ancient savants for its mysterious origins, its medicinal value and its irresistible sweetness. Greek honey is produced from bees that feed off wild flora; it is light years better, thicker, more flavorful than honey produced anywhere else in the world.

Greek home cooks and regional artisan producers always have savored the uniqueness of their local products and always have produced their regional specialties with care and pride. In the recipes that follow we've let tradition shine in new, innovative dishes that utilize the likes of Greek olives and olive oil, saffron, mastic, honey, regional cheeses, fish, specialty produce and more, all culled from the fertile Greek earth and sea. Our mission: to press on with the message that Greek food is healthy, simple, and delicious but also versatile and varied.

It's simple: Eat Greek and Feel Good!

HEPO
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4

Greek Olive Salad with Fennel, Ouzo, and Orange

For 8 meze servings



Kalamata Olives | Boukovo | Greek Orange | Greek Olive Oil | Ouzo

Ouzo
Anise-flavored and strong, Greece's famed aperitif is as delicious in food as with food!

Boukovo
Northern Greece's fiery flaked dried chili pepper and seeds.

Greek Olives
There are dozens of different Greek table olives. Here, the famed Kalamata and plump green Halkidiki olives are used.



Greek Olive Oil
More than 80% of it is extra-virgin.

Greek Orange
Oranges go beyond the fruit basket. They're used in sweets, salads, stews and often paired with olives.

3 tablespoons Greek extra-virgin olive oil, **1** small fennel bulb, diced, **1** garlic clove, peeled and minced, **2** teaspoons ouzo, **3** cups large, mixed Greek olives, pitted, rinsed and drained, **1/4** teaspoon boukovo (Greek red pepper flakes), **1/2** teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, **2** tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander, plus whole leaves for garnish, **1** tablespoon finely chopped orange zest, **E**ndive leaves for serving.

Heat one tablespoon of olive oil in a small skillet and saute the fennel and garlic over medium heat until softened slightly, about 4 minutes. Pour in the ouzo and let it steam off. Remove and set aside to cool.

Toss the olives with the fennel, red pepper flakes, pepper, coriander, and orange zest. Place a scant teaspoon of the chunky salad on endive leaves, garnish if desired with coriander leaves, and serve.

5 Spinach Salad with Graviera, Throumbes Olives, Pine Nuts, and Tomatoes

For 4 servings



Throumbes Graviera Thyme Honey Greek Orange Raisin Vinegar

Raisin Vinegar
A specialty of the Peloponnese, where raisin production was once a mainstay of the local economy.

Thyme Honey
Distinct and very aromatic, Greek thyme honey is one of the country's most unique raw ingredients.

Graviera
Graviera cheese, a nutty, mild Greek sheep's milk is made on several islands and parts of the mainland. Crete is especially well-known for its cave-aged graviera.



Greek Orange
Oranges and honey go together in many traditional Greek dishes.

Throumbes
Unctuous and fleshy, these PDO olives from Thassos are delicious in salads and on their own.

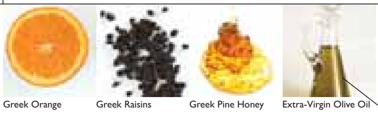
6 cups fresh young spinach, washed, drained, and trimmed, **1** red onion, finely chopped, **1/2** pound Greek graviera cheese, cut into small cubes, **1/2** cup pitted wrinkled black olives, such as Thassos throumbes olives, **4** tablespoons toasted pine nuts, **2/3** cup extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **2** tablespoons Greek raisin vinegar, **2** teaspoons grainy mustard, **2** teaspoons Greek thyme honey, **2** teaspoons orange juice, **1/2** teaspoon grated orange zest

Place the spinach in a serving bowl. Top with the onion, graviera, olives, and pine nuts.

Whisk together all the ingredients for the dressing. Pour it over the salad and serve.

6

Rainbow Salad with Greek Raisins



Greek Orange Greek Raisins Greek Pine Honey Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
Most Greek olive oil is extra virgin. Greek olive oils tend to be very green and fruity on the palate and are excellent raw in salads.

Greek Orange
Oranges and honey go together in many traditional Greek dishes but also in contemporary ones like this.

Greek Pine Honey
About 60% of all Greek honey is culled from bees who feed on pine. It is dark, luscious, and delicious.



Greek Raisins
Greece produces about 30.000 tons of raisins each year, mainly in the Peloponnese and Crete.

4 cups finely shredded cabbage, **2** cups finely shredded carrots, **1/2** cup dark seedless Greek raisins, **1/2** cup chopped parsley.
For the dressing: **1/2** cup extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **1** tablespoon Greek pine honey, **1** teaspoon grainy mustard, **J**uice of half an orange, **S**alt and **P**epper to taste

Combine all the ingredients for the salad in a large bowl.

Whisk together all the ingredients for the dressing. Pour into the salad and toss. Serve immediately.

7

Marinated Zucchini with Herbs and Graviera Cheese

Yield: 4 servings

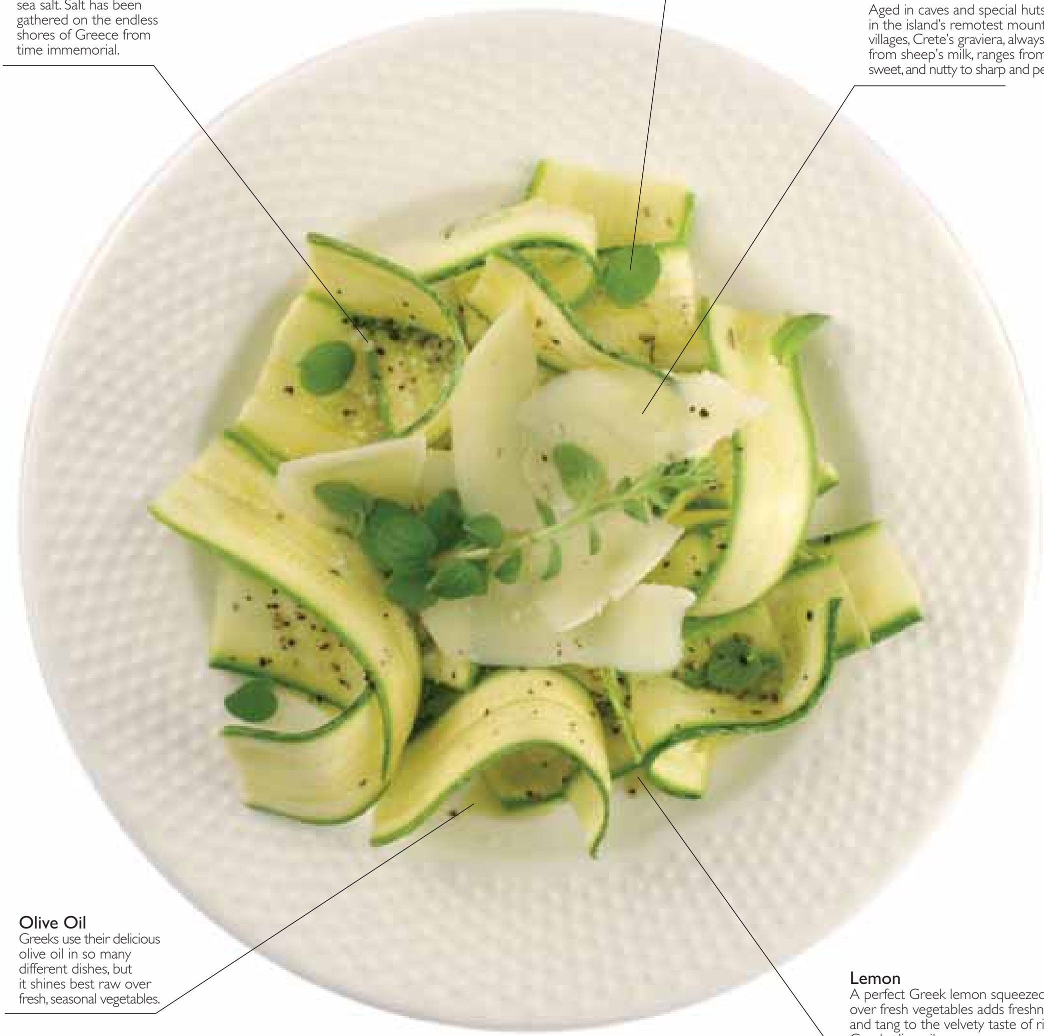


Oregano Lemon Cretan Graviera Greek Sea Salt Olive Oil

Oregano
Oregano, although presented here fresh, is usually used in its dried form in the Greek kitchen.

Greek Sea Salt
A few artisan food companies have been bottling delicious Greek sea salt. Salt has been gathered on the endless shores of Greece from time immemorial.

Cretan Graviera
Aged in caves and special huts in the island's remotest mountain villages, Crete's graviera, always made from sheep's milk, ranges from mild, sweet, and nutty to sharp and peppery.



Olive Oil
Greeks use their delicious olive oil in so many different dishes, but it shines best raw over fresh, seasonal vegetables.

Lemon
A perfect Greek lemon squeezed over fresh vegetables adds freshness and tang to the velvety taste of rich Greek olive oil.

2 medium zucchini, **3** tablespoons fresh, strained lemon juice, or more, to taste, **1/2** cup extra-virgin olive oil, **1** teaspoon fresh oregano leaves, finely chopped, **S**ea salt and **F**reshly ground black pepper, **5** ounces (150 gr) Cretan graviera, whole

Scrub the outside of the zucchini under cold running water and trim off the ends. Using a mandolin or food processor slice the zucchini lengthwise into paper-thin pieces. Whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, salt, pepper and oregano.

Arrange the zucchini in overlapping pieces on a large platter. Drizzle with the dressing. Let stand for 30 minutes to one hour to marinate.

Using a vegetable peeler, shave the graviera into thin strips and strew them decoratively over the zucchini. Serve immediately.

8

Roasted Red Florina Pepper and Giant Bean Puree

6 servings



Greek Lemon
Mainly from the Peloponnese, the country's citrus belt. Greek lemons are fragrant and juicy. Used in sauces, sweets, dips and on just about everything else!

Prespes Giant Beans
Thin-skinned, large and buttery, they're a PDO product from Greece's northwestern lake region, Prespes. Excellent in stews and casseroles.

Florina Peppers
Fleshy and sweet. A PDO product of Macedonia. Usually roasted and preserved in brine or olive oil.



Greek Paximathia
These are rusks, a traditional, healthy bread product made mainly with barley or whole wheat flour.

Tahini
A specialty of Thrace in N. Greece, where light and dark (from unhulled sesame) versions are produced.

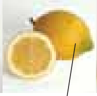
4 roasted red Florina peppers in olive oil, **1** cup cooked Greek giant beans from Prespes, drained, **3** garlic cloves, minced, **2** tablespoons tahini, **3** tablespoons extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **2-3** tablespoons lemon juice, **S**alt, **1/2** teaspoon cayenne, or more to taste.

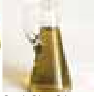
Pulse the red peppers, cooked beans, garlic, tahini, olive oil, and lemon juice until smooth. Season to taste with salt and cayenne. Serve with Greek barley rusks (paximathia).

Pan-Fried Greek Feta with a Sesame-Seed Crust

Yield: 4 servings


Feta


Lemon


Greek Olive Oil

Lemon
Excellent Greek lemons, with their aromatic flesh and juiciness, are the perfect foil for rich dishes and go especially well with cooked cheeses.

Greek Olive Oil
Olive oil is as practical in the skillet as it is raw, drizzled over salads and other foods, because it has a relatively high smoking point and imparts flavor to whatever is being sautéed or pan-fried.



Feta
Greek feta, a PDO cheese, is made in a range of textures. Some are creamy and soft, almost spreadable, while others are hard and tangy. All Greek feta is made from either sheep's milk or a combination of sheep's and goat's milk.

250 gr (1/2 pound) hard Greek feta, cut into 2 cm-thick (3/4-inch) slices, **1** large egg, lightly beaten, **2** cups sesame seeds, **4-6** tablespoons Greek olive oil

Spread the sesame seeds into a large plate. Dip the feta first in the egg and then press down in the sesame seeds, turning to coat well on both sides.

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy nonstick skillet. Place one or two slices of cheeses at a time in the skillet and sauté over medium-high heat. As soon as the feta begins to soften, flip it over to brown on the other side. Repeat with remaining feta.

10

Feta in Phyllo with Honey and Cumin

Yield: 1 portion



Greek Feta Honey Phyllo



Honey
Thyme honey, with its strong herbal flavor, works beautifully with feta. The combination of sour feta and honey has captured Greek chefs' imaginations in the last few years.

Phyllo
Phyllo is a simple pastry made from flour, water and salt. It is extremely versatile, used in traditional and contemporary meze, main courses, and desserts.

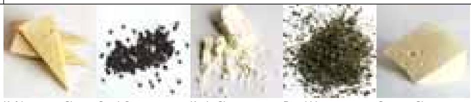
Greek Feta
The best Greek feta for pan-frying should be hard in texture so that it holds up well to the heat, without losing its shape or melting profusely.

1 3-to-4-inch (10-12 cm) square of Greek feta, approximately 1/3-inch (1-cm) thick, **P**inch of cumin, **B**lack pepper to taste, **1** scant teaspoon Greek thyme or pine honey, plus more for drizzling on top, **1/2** a sheet of commercial phyllo, **G**reek olive oil for pan-frying

Place the feta in the middle of half a sheet of commercial phyllo. Make sure the phyllo is defrosted and at room temperature. Sprinkle a little cumin and black pepper over the feta and drizzle lightly with honey. Wrap like a package, tucking the ends in.

In a nonstick skillet, heat 1 teaspoon olive oil and place the phyllo packet seam-side down. Sauté until the bottom is golden and flip to brown lightly on the top side. Remove, plate, and drizzle with honey. Serve immediately.

Phyllo Pastries with Mint, Greek Cheeses, and Raisins





Dried Mint
Mint is one of the most popular Greek herbs, used fresh but also dried. It couples well with cheese, lemon, sweet, dried fruits and more.

Kefalograviera Cheese
One of the stellar sheep's milk cheeses of Greece, kefalograviera is a hard, sharp cheese made in various islands and mainland locales. It is excellent in fillings, as a grating cheese, but also on its own as a table cheese.

Katiki Cheese
One of many PDO cheeses, katiki, soft and sharp, is among the traditional naturally fermented cheeses of the Greek mainland.

Greek Raisins
Greek raisins, succulent and intensely flavored thanks to the traditional way they are dried, under the heat of the Greek summer sun, are among the country's oldest lauded specialty products. The Venetians and Ottomans both prized them. Raisins are a great addition to both sweet and savory dishes in Greece. They even appear in traditional fish dishes.

6 cups all-purpose flour, **1/2** cup sugar, **2** teaspoons baking powder, **1/4** cup fresh strained lemon or orange juice, **1 1/2** cups melted butter, **1** cup milk, **200 gr.** (7 ounces) Cretan graviera cheese, **100 gr.** (3 ounces) Kefalograviera cheese, **450 gr.** (15 ounces) Greek anthotyro, katiki or myzithra cheeses or a combination of all three, **1** large egg, slightly beaten, **1** cup Greek raisins, **1** tablespoon dried Greek mint or 2 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped

Combine 5 cups flour, sugar and baking powder in the bowl of a food processor outfitted with the dough attachment and pulse to combine. Add the melted butter, lemon or orange juice and milk and process until a smooth dough forms. Add more flour if necessary. Set aside, covered, in an oiled bowl at room temperature for one hour.

Combine the cheeses, egg, raisins, and mint. Divide the dough into 6 balls and run each through a pasta maker several times to get long strips about 1/8-inch (5 mm) thick. Place the dough on a lightly floured surface. Place a heaping tablespoon of filling four inches (10 cm) apart. Fold dough over and cut into crescents or half-moons, pressing down to seal and form a decorative edge. Repeat with remaining pastry and filling. Bake the pastries in a preheated oven at 170C (350F) for about 15 minutes, or until golden. Let cool and serve.

12 Mastic-scented Greek Cheese Mousse with Tomato Spoon Sweet

Yield: 8 servings



Feta Greek Yogurt Chios Mastic Tomato spoon sweet Anthotyro



1/2 cup strained Greek yogurt, **100 gr** (3 ounces) medium-soft Feta, **150 gr** (5 ounces) Greek anthotyro or fresh myzithra cheese, **1** teaspoon mastic powder, **C**ommercially prepared tomato spoon sweet. **For the mint oil: 60 ml** extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **1/2** cup fresh basil leaves

Grate the feta and combine with the yogurt, anthotyro or myzithra, and mastic in a food processor. Blend until smooth. Place in small ring molds or ramekins, cover, and refrigerate for 2-4 hours to set.

Blanch the mint leaves for 10 seconds in boiling water, remove with a slotted spoon, and drop in an ice bath. Drain and pat dry. Pulse together with the olive oil in a food processor. Filter through a fine-mesh sieve and set aside.

Serve the mousse in dollops or in ramekins, garnished with tomato spoon sweet and mint oil.

13

Spinach Fritters with Feta-Yogurt Dip

For 6 meze servings



Lemon
Lemon and yogurt, lemon and feta, lemon and just about everything! Greek lemons are one of the most important citrus fruits grown in the country. Most come from the Peloponnese and Crete.

Feta
The national cheese of Greece is made from sheep and goat's milk.

Yogurt
Strained Greek yogurt has conquered exports markets from Adelaide to San Fracnisco. Thick and tangy, it's versatile and great as a dip.



Greek Oregano
Exceptionally intense in flavor, thanks to Greece's sunny, arid clime, oregano grows wild on mountainsides all over the country.

1/2 cup crumbled Greek feta cheese, **1/2** cup strained Greek yogurt, **2 1/2** tablespoons chopped fresh chives, **1 1/2** tablespoons fresh lemon juice, **1** teaspoon fresh oregano, **1** kilo (2 pounds) fresh spinach or chard, trimmed and washed, **1** large onion, finely chopped, **S**alt and **P**epper, **1** teaspoon ground nutmeg, **1 1/2** cups flour, **1** teaspoon baking powder, **1 1/2-2** cups water, **1** egg, lightly beaten, **O**live oil for frying

Using a fork, mash feta cheese in small bowl. Mix in next 4 ingredients. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Let stand 30 minutes to allow flavors to develop. (Dip can be made 2 days ahead.) Cover and refrigerate.

Steam the spinach and drain it well. Chop. Mix with the onion, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Combine 1 cup of flour, baking powder and 1 1/2 cups water. Mix well. Add the spinach mixture and egg to the batter and mix. Adjust consistency with more flour if necessary.

Heat 3 cm (1 1/2 inches) olive oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Drop 3 to 4 tablespoons at a time of the spinach mixture into the hot oil
and fry until golden on bottom. Flip and fry on the other side, Drain on paper towels and repeat until mixture is finished. Replenish the oil

Sesame Eggplant Rings with Yogurt-Feta Dip

Yield: 8 meze serving



Greek Honey | Eggplant | Olive Oil | Greek Yogurt | Greek Feta

Eggplant
Eggplant is surprisingly receptive to the sweetness of honey. Several varieties of eggplant grow in Greece and the vegetable is a favorite, used in myriad meze, main courses, and even confections.

Greek Feta
The pleasantly sour tang of Greek yogurt and the robust taste of Greek feta make these two ingredients work exceptionally well together. Lemon adds a refreshing note.

Olive Oil
Olive oil is the fat of choice for frying in the traditional Greek kitchen, and fried vegetable rounds, especially eggplant and zucchini, are classics.



Greek Honey
A drizzling of Greek honey, especially thyme or pine honey, adds another dimension to all sorts of foods, even crisp fried vegetables, which are a classic on the meze table.

Greek Yogurt
It's thick tangy and excellent in dips.

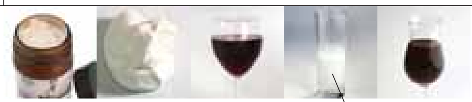
1 1/4 pound (500 gr) medium-sized eggplants, cut into 1/8-inch- (5 mm-) thick rounds, **4** cups water, **2** teaspoons salt, **2/3** cup all purpose flour, **1** teaspoon baking powder, **1/2** teaspoon salt, **1** cup whole milk, **2** large eggs, lightly beaten, **G**reek olive oil for frying, **1/4** cup Greek pine honey, **3** tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted, **2** tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves, **F**eta-yogurt dipping sauce, page 13.

Place eggplant in large bowl with water and salt and soak for 30 minutes. Drain well and blot dry with paper towels. Mix flour, baking powder, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in medium bowl. Whisk in milk and eggs. Heat 2/3 cup olive oil in a heavy, large skillet over medium heat. Dip eggplant rounds in batter, then fry in oil until golden and puffed. Drain on paper towels.

Warm honey in small saucepan over medium heat. Place eggplant rounds on platter. Drizzle with honey and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Garnish with mint. Serve with feta-yogurt dipping sauce.

15 Little Meatballs with Greek Yogurt and Mavrodafne-Mastic Tomato Sauce

Yield: 8 servings



Chios Mastic Yogurt Greek Red Wine Ouzo Mavrodafne



Meatballs: 200 gr (7 ounces) ground beef, **200 gr** (7 ounces) ground lamb, **100 gr** (3 1/2 ounces) stale bread, dampened and squeezed, **2** tablespoons Greek olive oil, **1/2** cup finely chopped onion, **2** eggs, lightly beaten, **2** tablespoons finely chopped parsley, **2** tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint, **1/2** teaspoon dried Greek oregano, **1** tablespoon ouzo, salt and pepper. **Yogurt Sauce: 300 gr** (1 1/2 cups) strained Greek yogurt, **50 ml** milk, **1** tablespoon finely chopped mint. **Tomato-Wine-Mastic Sauce: 200 ml** chopped tomatoes, **200 ml** Greek red wine, **200 ml** mavrodafne wine, **2** tablespoons Greek honey, **1** teaspoon green peppercorns, **1** teaspoon mastic powder

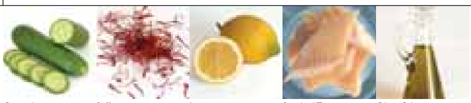
Combine all the ingredients for the meatballs together, knead well and shape into small meatballs, about the size of a walnut. Dust with flour and fry in a non-stick skillet in hot olive oil. Whisk together the ingredients for the yogurt sauce and set aside.

Place all the ingredients for the tomato sauce except for the mastic in a saucepan and simmer on medium heat until reduced by one-third and thickened. Add the mastic, stir for one minute, and remove. Serve the meatballs on individual plates with a dollop of yogurt and a little sauce on the side.

16

Smoked Farm-Raised Trout with Saffron Vinaigrette

Yield: 8 servings



Cucumbers Saffron Lemon Smoked Trout Olive Oil

Cucumbers
The small, crisp cucumbers that grow on the island of Crete are exceptionally refreshing. Greeks use cucumbers mainly in salads. Drizzled with a little extra-virgin Greek olive oil, they're a perfect, easy meze on their own.

Smoked Trout
Trout was one of the first fish to be farmed in Greece. Several local species of trout flourish in the freshwater lakes and streams of northern Greece, where most trout farming has been established, too.

Lemon
The lemon-olive oil duet that plays so often over Greek foods, from fish to salads such as this, is a classic. Enlivened with a little saffron, it takes on an exotic undertone.



Saffron
A product of the north, around the town of Kozani, Greek saffron has been rediscovered by contemporary Greek chefs. It is used in light sauces, but also on breads, biscuits, spirit distillations and even as an addition to coffee.

1 medium Cretan cucumber, **1** medium fennel bulb, **4** filets of smoked Greek farm-raised salmon trout, **1** tablespoon fennel seed, **1/2** tablespoon fresh lemon juice, **S**alt and **F**reshly ground green and pink peppercorns, **60 ml** extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **25 ml** fresh lemon juice, **1** pinch of Greek saffron, diluted in a tablespoon of warm water, **1** teaspoon Greek honey, **1/2** teaspoon mustard, **3** tablespoons fresh orange juice, **1/2** teaspoon grated lemon zest

Seed the cucumber. Cut into paper-thin strips, toss with salt and drain in a colander. Trim the fennel bulb and cut into paper-thin slices on a mandolin. Crisp in an ice-water bath with a little lemon juice for 10 minutes then drain. Whisk together all the ingredients for the dressing. Serve the trout with the fennel and cucumber on top and drizzle with the saffron-lemon dressing. Serve.

17

Fresh Sea Bass Fillets with Green-Olive Sauce

For 4 servings



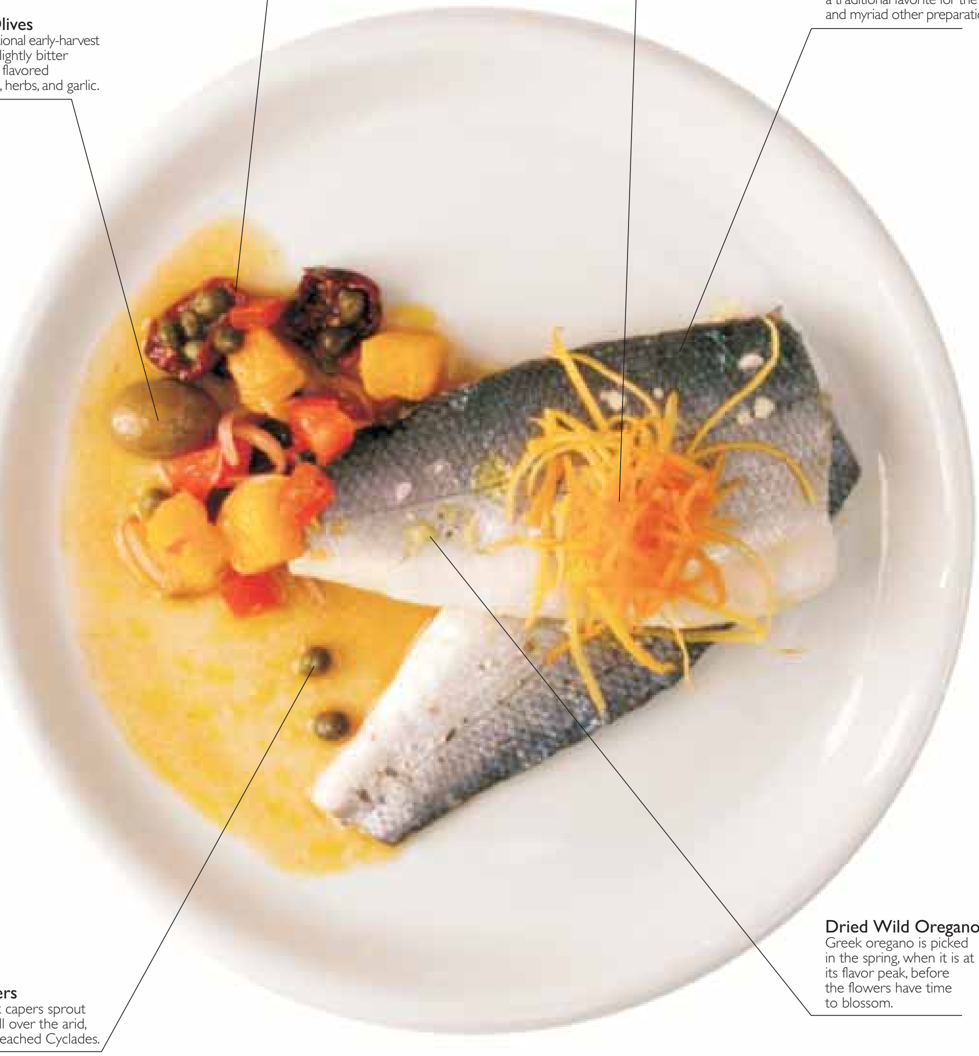
Orange | Sea Bassn | Sun-dried Tomatoes | Capers | Green Olives | Dried Wild Oregano

Greek Orange
Oranges go beyond the fruit basket. They're used in sweets, stews and often paired with olives.

Sun-dried Tomatoes
Greece enjoys more than 300 days a year of perfect sunshine, so it's no wonder the country's sun-dried tomatoes, an agrarian tradition all over the country, are so intense, sweet and delicious.

Sea Bass
Sea bass is one of the main types of farmed Greek fish, a traditional favorite for the grill and myriad other preparations.

Green Olives
These traditional early-harvest olives are slightly bitter and usually flavored with lemon, herbs, and garlic.



Dried Wild Oregano
Greek oregano is picked in the spring, when it is at its flavor peak, before the flowers have time to blossom.

Capers
Greek capers sprout wild all over the arid, sun-bleached Cyclades.

1 small Greek navel orange, **3** fresh plum or Santorini tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped, **2** Greek sun-dried tomatoes, reconstituted in warm water and drained, **2** tablespoons orange juice, **1/3** cup finely chopped red onion, **2** tablespoons fresh, strained lemon juice, **2** tablespoons extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **1/2** cup finely chopped pitted Greek green olives, **1/2** teaspoon crushed coriander seeds, **1/2** teaspoon paprika, 1 tablespoon Greek capers, drained and finely chopped, **2** teaspoons dried Greek oregano. **For the fish: 4** 180-gr (6-ounce) sea bass (lavraki) fillets, **2** teaspoons lemon zest, finely chopped, **2** teaspoons orange zest, finely chopped, **S**alt and **F**reshly ground black pepper, **4** tablespoons extra-virgin Greek olive oil for drizzling

Grate the orange to get the zest. Peel the orange, removing the pith completely. Chop into a 1/4 inch dice. Combine all the ingredients for the salsa in a bowl and let stand for one hour. Preheat the oven to 180C/375F. Lightly oil a baking dish large enough to fit the fish in one layer. Season the fish on both sides with salt and pepper.

Place in the pan and sprinkle with the orange and lemon zest. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil. Bake for about 12 minutes, or until the fish is fork tender. Remove, place on a platter, spoon the salsa and any pan juices over the fish and serve.

Marinated Farm-Raised Bream with Light Taramosalata

Yield: 4 meze servings



Bream



Taramosalata



Greek Olive Oil

Greek Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
Most Greek olive oil is extra-virgin, thanks to the family-farm growing conditions and care taken at small groves, the immediate processing, and the Coroneiki as well as other oil olive varieties pressed.

Bream
Fish farming in Greece is a vibrant part of the food industry. Sea bass, bream, and porghies are among the most common farmed fish.

Taramosalata
While not quite an export, the tangy, creamy puree of fish roe and either bread or potatoes, is a Greek classic. Here it is used with a very light touch, as a sauce.



1 kilo (2.2 lbs.) Greek farmed sea bream, **600 ml** extra-virgin olive oil, **150 ml** fresh lemon juice, salt and pepper. **Taramosalata: 75 gr** (2 1/2 ounces) Greek fish roe (tarama), **1** thick slice dried, **S**tale bread, dampened and crumbled, **1** garlic clove, **1/2** cup Greek extra-virgin olive oil, **1** tablespoon fresh lemon juice, **1** cup seltzer or water, or more as needed

Wash and fillet the bream into two pieces per fish. Whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Take each fillet and slice it into think strips. Toss gently with the marinade and let the fish stand, covered, for two hours.

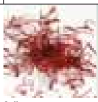
Whip together all the ingredients for the taramosalata, adding the olive oil, lemon juice and seltzer or water in alternating doses. Dilute with additional seltzer or water to achieve a thin, light consistency.

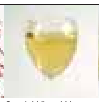
Spread the taramosalata on a plate and serve the fish over it.

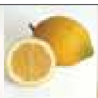
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Sautéed Shrimp with Saffron Avgolemono

For 4 servings


Saffron


Greek White Wine


Greek Lemon


Olive Oil



Greek White Wine
There dozens of white wine grapes in Greece. Any one of the country's dry white wines matches this dish perfectly.

Olive Oil
The deliciously grassy and prize-winning olive oil from Siteia in eastern Crete goes especially well in this dish.

Greek Lemon
There is nothing like a real Greek lemon to add fragrance and tang to the egg-lemon sauce that is one of the basics of the Greek kitchen.

Saffron
Known and savored since antiquity, Greek saffron is harvested in the Fall in the northern region of Kozani.

3 cups vegetable broth, **16** medium shrimp, cleaned and deveined (reserve shells for broth), **3** tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, **1** garlic clove, thinly sliced, **1/2** cup dry Greek white wine, **S**alt and **F**reshly ground white pepper to taste, **1** egg, **J**uice of 1 lemon, **1/2** teaspoon Greek saffron crushed and dissolved in 2 tablespoons warm water

Make the sauce: Heat the vegetable broth and shrimp shells in a medium pot over high heat for about 30 minutes, or until reduced to one cup. Strain, reserving the broth. Add the saffron to the hot broth and stir. Whisk together the egg and lemon juice.

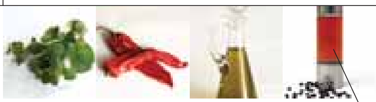
Place the broth back on the stove, bring to a gentle simmer and add a small ladleful of it to the egg-lemon mixture, whisking all the while. Add another small ladleful, whisking. Pour the egg-lemon mixture into the pot, turn off the heat, and swirl to combine. Set aside, uncovered.

Heat the olive oil over medium heat. Sauté the shrimp and garlic for 2-3 minutes, until the shrimp turn pink. Add the wine, raise the heat, and steam off the alcohol. Reduce heat, add the saffron egg-lemon mixture to the skillet, stir gently to thicken slightly. Remove and serve.

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Octopus and Roasted Red Florina Pepper Salad

For 6 servings



Greek Oregano | Florina Peppers (roasted) | Olive Oil | Raisin Vinegar from Corinth

Raisin Vinegar from Corinth
Raisin vinegar is a unique Greek product, made in the Peloponnese from macerated Corinthian raisins.

Olive Oil
Greece's olive oil is exceptional. Most is extra-virgin, fruity and emerald green.

Greek Oregano
Aromatic and pleasantly bitter, Greek oregano gets most of its intense flavor from the country's bountiful sunshine and proximity to the sea.



Florina Peppers (roasted)
These sweet, fleshy red peppers are a PDO product from Macedonia. They're great in seafood and other salads or on their own with olive oil and herbs.

1 medium octopus, cleaned, **2/3** cup Greek raisin vinegar, **2/3** cup extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **1** garlic clove, in slivers, **1** teaspoon dried Greek oregano, Bay leaf, **1/2** teaspoon whole black peppercorns, **4** large roasted red peppers, seeded, **4** scallions, white part only, **1** tablespoon fresh oregano leaves, minced, **1** tablespoon fresh, flat-leaf parsley, minced, **3** tablespoons extra-virgin Greek olive oil, more if desired, **3** small bunches frisee, trimmed and washed

In a large, heavy pot, covered over low heat, cook the octopus for about 50 minutes or until it turns bright pink. Remove and cool. If desired, cut each tentacle on the bias into thin oval slices. Whisk together the vinegar, olive oil, garlic, dried oregano, bay leaf, and peppercorns. Place the octopus slices in a clean jar large enough to hold it and the marinade. Pour the marinade over the octopus. Cover and marinate for at least 24 hours or up to one week in the refrigerator.

To prepare the salad: Chop the roasted red peppers and cut the scallions into thin rounds. Remove the octopus with a slotted spoon and combine with the peppers, scallions, herbs and olive oil. Serve on a large platter or on six individual plates, over the frisee. Drizzle with additional olive oil if desired.

Open-Faced Eggplant-Fish Tart



Eggplant Phyllo Sea Bass Mint Olive Oil Sea Salt

Eggplant
Eggplant is arguably one of the most popular vegetables in Greek cuisine, almost on a par with fresh vine-ripened tomatoes. It is used in everything from meze to fish and meat dishes, even in sweets.

Mint
Greek mint, one of the basic Greek herbs, marries well with everything from lamb to fish and eggplants.

Phyllo
Phyllo pastry can be turned into open-faced pies like this, a Franco-Grecque variation on the theme of tarte tatin. The pastry is crisp and very easy to use, as long as one knows the basic rule: Phyllo has to be at room temperature.



Olive Oil
Greece's olive oil is exceptional. Most is extra-virgin, fruity and emerald green.

Sea Bass
Sea bass is one of the main types of farmed Greek fish, a traditional favorite for the grill and myriad other preparations.

Clarified butter or olive oil for sautéing, **300 gr** (10 ounces) medium eggplants, cut into thin rounds, **150 gr** (5 ounces) potatoes, peeled, boiled and hot, **50 gr** (2 ounces) ground walnuts, **3** garlic cloves, **400 gr** farmed Greek sea bass or bream, porgies or a combination of any three, filleted and shredded, **6** sheets commercial phyllo, Extra-virgin olive oil as needed, Greek sea salt to taste

Heat 2 tablespoons clarified butter or olive oil in a nonstick skillet and sauté the eggplant rounds until lightly browned on both sides. In an electric mixer, whisk together the potatoes, walnuts, garlic, salt, and olive oil to form a pungent puree. Add the shredded fish to the puree.

Layer and oil three phyllo sheets at a time and cut into quarters. Repeat with remaining three sheets. Press each quarter into 8 lightly greased 10-cm (4-inch) round tart pans. Spread the potato mixture evenly over the bottom of each tartlet and place the eggplant rounds in a decorative pattern on top. Bake in a preheated oven at 170C/350F for about 20 minutes, or until the phyllo is golden and the filling set. Remove, cool slightly, and serve.

Lamb Souvlaki with Feta-Mint Sauce

For 6 servings



Feta Sea Salt Olive Oil Mint

Sea Salt
Sea salt is harvested in late August and September. Greek sea salt is often sold mixed with aromatic Greek wild herbs.

Mint
Mint and feta, cool and sharp, go very well together.



Olive Oil
Greek cooks use olive oil as a cooking medium, marinade, and condiment. Its fruity flavors are most pronounced when used raw.

Feta
Greek feta is a PDO traditional product, produced in specific regions in the Peloponnese, the mainland, the north as well as on the island of Lesvos.

1 1/2 kilos (3 lbs.) boneless leg of lamb, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes, **1** teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, **4** tablespoons Greek extra-virgin olive oil, **3** large garlic cloves, peeled and sliced into thin slivers, **S**alt to taste. **For the sauce: 2** tablespoons ground blanched almonds, **2** garlic cloves, peeled and minced, **2** bunches fresh mint, leaves only, coarsely chopped, **1/2** cup grated Greek feta, **6** tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, **2** tablespoons fresh lemon juice, **S**alt and **F**reshly ground black pepper, to taste

Toss the lamb with olive oil, pepper, and garlic. Cover and marinate for one hour. Preheat the broiler.

Process the almonds, garlic and mint to a paste. Add the feta, olive oil, lemon juice, and pepper. Season to taste with salt. Set aside at room temperature for a half hour but not more than one hour before serving.

Thread the lamb pieces onto the skewers and broil for about 12 minutes for medium-well. Remove and serve with the salsa.

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Greek-Honey-Roasted Lamb Chops

Yield: 4 servings



Honey



Extra-Virgin Olive Oil



Red Wine Vinegar



6 tablespoons Greek thyme or pine honey, **3/4** cup extra-virgin Greek olive oil, **6** sprigs fresh thyme, **2** kilos (4 1/2 pounds) baby lamb chops, **6** tablespoons red wine vinegar, **3** tablespoons water, **1** cup pine nuts, toasted, **750 gr** (1 1/2 pounds) arugula or Cretan wild chicory

Preheat the oven to 200C/500F. Whisk together the honey, 4 tablespoons olive oil, and thyme and heat in a small saucepan. Season the lamb with salt and pepper, brush with the warm honey mixture and roast in an oiled pan for about 10-12 minutes, or until medium rare. Brush with the honey mixture once or twice during the roasting.

Combine the vinegar, water, remaining olive oil and remaining honey mixture and heat in a small saucepan to emulsify. Add the pine nuts. Place the arugula or Cretan greens on four serving plates, drizzle with the warm dressing and serve with the lamb chops.

Golden Saffron Semolina Pudding

Yield: 6-8 servings



Greek Saffron



Greek Honey



Aegina Pistachios



Greek Honey
In this recipe it is used more for its subtle, aromatic flavor than for lending all the sweetness necessary to complete the dish.

Aegina Pistachios
Pistachios from the Greek island of Aegina are renowned all over Greece for their buttery flavor and crunchy texture. Pistachios are used in many dishes, from salads and complex meat, poultry and fish dishes, to sweets.

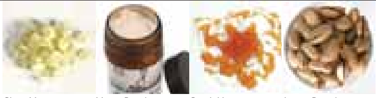
Greek Saffron
Saffron and grains go well together. Greeks add saffron to various traditional desserts, among them this classic semolina pudding, called halva.

1/2 teaspoon Greek saffron threads, **2** tablespoons scalded milk, **9** tablespoons unsalted butter, **1/3** cup Aegina pistachios, **3/4** cup sugar, **1/4** cup Greek honey, **2** cups milk, **1** cup coarse semolina

Soften the saffron in the scalded milk for 30 minutes. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a nonstick skillet and brown the pistachios for 2 minutes. Let cool and remove their thin skins. Set aside.

Combine the sugar, honey and milk in a medium saucepan and heat until the sugar dissolves. In a separate, large nonstick skillet melt the remaining butter over medium heat and add the semolina. Stir continuously over low flame for 8-10 minutes, or until lightly browned. Add the saffron milk and the sugar mixture. Continue stirring until the liquid has been completely absorbed and the mixture is dense and thick. Add the pistachios and pour the mixture into a scalloped ring mold. Cover with a cloth and let it set for several hours. Remove from mold by dipping into a cool water bath. Serve on a platter.

Mastic-Scented Mandolato



Chios Mastic Mastic Powder Greek Honey Aegina Pistachios

Aegina Pistachios
One of the best-known nuts in Greece, pistachios from the island of Aegina are sold at kiosks all over Greece and in Greek shops abroad. They are used in sweet and savory dishes alike.

Greek honey
This classic confection from the Ionian islands calls for Greek honey, which helps give it its soft, chewy texture as well as its aromatic sweetness.



Chios Mastic & Mastic Powder
Chios Mastic, from the resinous tree that flourishes only on the Greek island of Chios, lends an inebriating, mysterious aroma to countless desserts. It comes in crystal form, powder, oil and more.

220 gr (7 ounces) sugar, **150 gr** (5 ounces) Greek honey, **100 ml** water, **50 ml** glucose, **40 gr** (1 1/3 ounces) egg white, **300 gr** (10 ounces) toasted blanched almonds, **125 gr** unsalted Greek (Aegina) pistachios, Confectioner's sugar, **1/2** teaspoon mastic powder

Place the sugar, water, and glucose in a saucepan and heat over medium flame until it reaches 145C/293F. In a separate saucepan heat the honey until it reaches 130C/275F.

Whip the egg whites. Continue whipping and add the heated honey in a very slow stream, whipping all the while. Add the sugar syrup in the same manner. Whip the meringue for about 15 minutes until very stiff. Add the almonds and pistachios as well as the mastic powder.

Place a shallow rectangular or ring mold on a sheet pan and dust the bottom generously with confectioner's sugar.
Pour the meringue mixture into the ring mold. Press down with a spatula so that it is even all over. Sprinkle with more confectioner's sugar. Let the mixture set for 4-9 hours, until dense and hard but chewy. Cut into squares or rectangles, wrap in plastic wrap to keep fresh and serve.

Greek-Yogurt Ice Cream

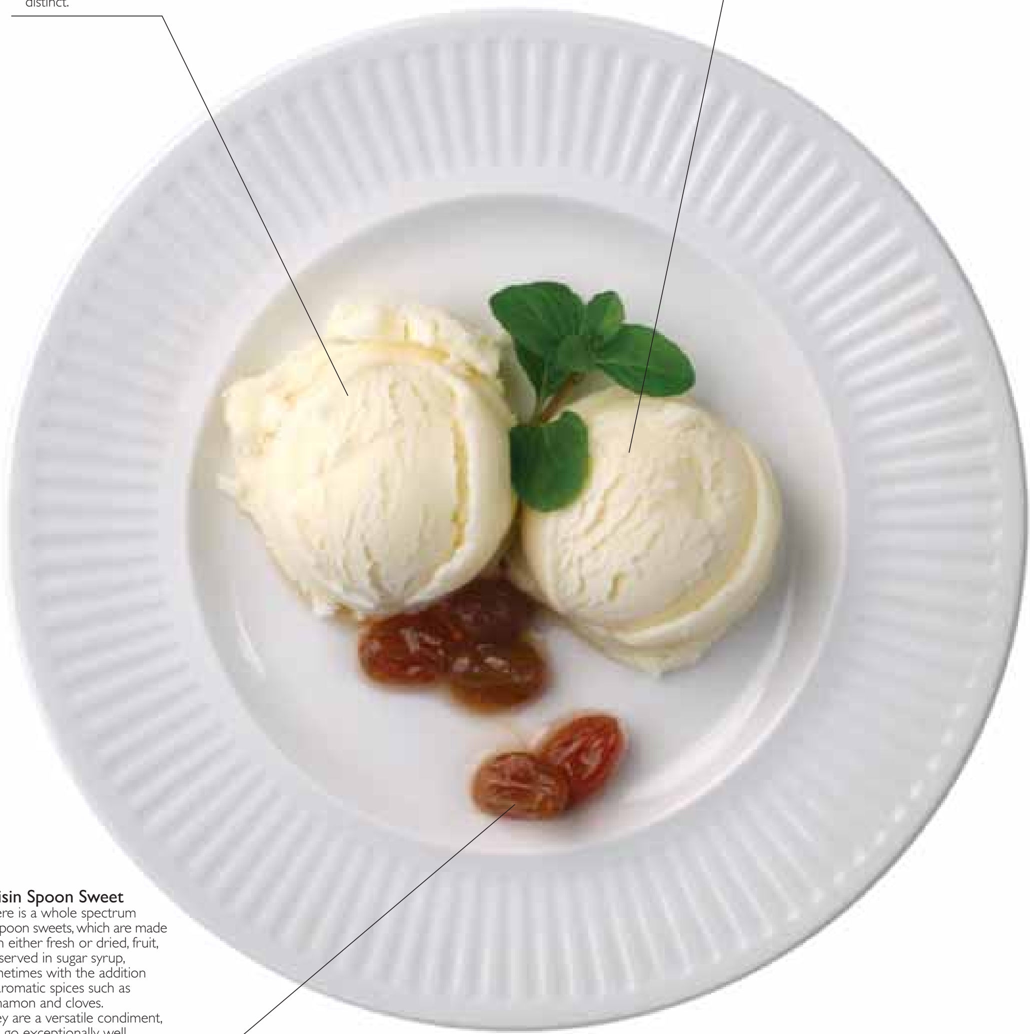

Greek Yogurt


Lemons


Raisin Spoon Sweet

Greek Yogurt
Frozen yogurt is a longstanding treat. When it's made with Greek strained yogurt, renowned for its dense, silky texture and characteristic tartness, the frozen dessert acquires a whole other flavor dimension.

Lemons
Grown mainly in the Peloponnese and on the island of Crete, lemons are one of the mainstays of the Greek table and one of the flavors that make so much Greek food distinct.



Raisin Spoon Sweet
There is a whole spectrum of spoon sweets, which are made with either fresh or dried, fruit, preserved in sugar syrup, sometimes with the addition of aromatic spices such as cinnamon and cloves. They are a versatile condiment, and go exceptionally well with yogurt. The raisin sweet is a regional specialty from Crete.

450 ml strained Greek yogurt, **150 ml** heavy cream (35% fat), **150 gr** (5 ounces) confectioner's sugar, **G**rated zest of 1 lemon, **R**aisin spoon sweet

Combine the yogurt, cream, sugar, and zest in the canister of the ice-cream maker and follow individual machine's operating instructions. If there is no ice cream maker, mix everything by hand and place it in a metal container in the refrigerator. Mix it by hand six times - about once every half hour - over the course of the day. Serve the frozen yogurt with raisin spoon sweet or with any other Greek preserved fruit.

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